

THE HOUSE OF FAME. LIBER PRIMUS.



Incipit Liber Primus. Proem.



TURN E US EVERY DREEM TO GODE!
for hit is wonder, by the rode,
To my wit, what causeth swevenes
Either on morwes, or on evenes;
And why the effect folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal never come;

Why that is an avisioun,
And this a revelacioun;
Why this a dreem, why that a sweven,
And nat to every manliche even;
Why this a fantom, these oracles,
I noot; but whoso of these miracles
The causes knoweth bet than I,
Devyne he; for I certainly
Ne can hem noght, ne never thinke
To besily my wit to swinke,
To knowe of hir signifiante
The gendres, neither the distaunce
Of tymes of hem, ne the causes
forwhy this more than that cause is;
As if folkes complexiouns
Make hem dreem of reflexiouns;
Or elles thus, as other sayn,
for to greet feblenesse of brayn,
By abstinence, or by seeknesse,
Prison, stewe, or greet distresse;
Or elles by disordinaunce
Of naturel acustomaunce
That som man is to curious
In studie, or melancolicus,
Or thus, so inly ful of drede,
That no man may him bote bede;

Or elles, that devocioun
Of somme, and contemplacioun
Causeth swiche dreemes ofte;
Or that the cruel tyf unsofte
Which these ilke lovers leden
That hopen over muche or dreden,
That purely hir impressiouns
Causeth hem avisiouns;
Or if that spirits have the might
To make folk to dreem anight
Or if the soule, of propre kinde,
Be so parfit, as men finde,
That hit forwot that is to come,
And that hit warneth alle and somme
Of everiche of hir aventures
By avisiouns, or by figures,
But that our flesh ne hath no might
To understonden hit aright,
for hit is warned to derkly;
But why the cause is, noght wot I,
Wel worthe, of this thing, grette clerkes,
That trette of this and other werkes;
for I of noon opinioun
Nilas now make mencion,
But only that the holy rode
Turne us every dreem to gode!
for never, sith that I was born,
Neno man elles, me biforn,
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderfull a dreem as I
The tenth day dide of Decembre,
The which, as I can now remembre,
I wol yow tellen every del.

The Invocation.

BUT at my ginning, trusteth
wel,
I wol make invocacioun,
With special devocioun,
Unto the god of slepe
anoon,
That dwelleth in a cave of
ston
Upon a stream that comth
fro Lete,
That is a flood of helle unswete;
Besyde a folk men clepe Cimerie,
Ther slepeth ay this god unmerie
With his slepy thousand sones
That alway for to slepe hir wone is;
And to this god, that I of rede,
Preye I, that he wol me spede
My sweven for to telle aright,
If every dreem stonde in his might.
And he, that mover is of al
That is and was, and ever shal,
So yive hem joye that hit here
Of alle that they dreem to yere,
And for to stonden alle in grace
Of hir loves, or in what place
That hem wer levest for to stonde,
And shelde hem fro povert and shonde,
And fro unhappe and ech dise,
And sende hem al that may hem plesse,
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That take hit wel, and scorne hit noght,
Ne hit misdemen in her thoght
Through malicious entencioun,
And whoso, through presumpcioun,
Or hate or scorne, or through envye,
Dispyt, or jape, or vilanye,
Misdeme hit, preye I Jesus God
That (dreem he barfoot, dreem he shod),
That every harm that any man
Hath had, sith that the world began,
Befalle him therof, or he sterve,
And graunte he mote hit ful deserve,
Lo! with swich a conclusioun
As had of his avisioun
Cresus, that was king of Lyde,
That high upon a gebet dyde!
This prayer shal he have of me;
I am no bet in charite!
Now herkneth, as I have you seyd,
What that I mette, or I abreyd.

The Dream.

Of Decembre the tenth day,
When hit was night, to
slepe I lay
Right ther as I was wont
to done,
And fil on slepe wonder
sone,
As he that very was forgo
On pilgrimage myles two
To the corseynt Leonard,
To make lythe of that was hard.
AT as I sleep, me mette I was
Within a temple ymad of glas;
In whiche ther were mo images
Of gold, stondinge in sondry stages,
And mo riche tabernacles,
And with perre mo pinacles,
And mo curious portreytures,
And queynte maner of figures
Of olde werke, then I saw ever.
for certeynly, I niste never
Wher that I was, but wel wiste I,
Hit was of Venus redely,
The temple; for, in portreyture,
I saw anoone right hir figure
Naked fletinge in a see.
And also on hir heed, parde,
Hir rose garlond whyt and reed,
And hir comb to kembe hir heed,
Hir dowves, and daun Cupido,
Hir blinde sone, and Vulcano,
That in his face was ful broun.
AT as I romed up and down,
I fond that on a wal ther was
Thus writen, on a table of bras:
I wol now singe, if that I can,
The armes, and also the man,
That first cam, through his destinee,
fugitif of Troye contree,
In Itaille, with ful moche pyne,
Unto the strondes of Lavyne.
And tho began the story anoone,

The House
of Fame.
Liber I.